

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 9, 18 and 26 have been amended and claims 2-5, 10-13, 16, 19-22, and 26-33 have been cancelled. New claims 34 and 35 have been added.

Applicants have amended the claims to more succinctly describe the claimed invention. Accordingly, applicants submit that the proposed amendments do not raise new issues that would require further searching or consideration. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification and the claims. Accordingly applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced by the foregoing amendments.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 14-19, 21, 23-27, 29 and 31-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimizu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,731,669). The Examiner indicated that dependent claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 4 and 5. Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 1, and claims 6-8 which depend from claim 1, are allowable.

The Examiner indicated that dependent claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Independent claim 9 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 12 and 13. Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 9, and claims 14, 15, 17 which depend from claim 9, are allowable.

The Examiner indicated that dependent claim 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Independent claim 18 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 21 and 22. Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 18, and claims 23-25 which depend from claim 18, are allowable.

Applicants have added new independent claims 34 and 35 to claim particular aspects of the present invention. Support for claims 34-35 can be found within the specification and the original claims. Applicants submit that no new subject matter has been added by claims 34-35. The Examiner indicated that dependent claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and intervening claims. New claim 34 includes similar limitations as original claim 1 and claims 2 and 3. Accordingly, applicants submit that new claim 34 is allowable. Further, the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and intervening claims. New claim 35 includes similar limitations as original claim 9 and claims 10 and 11. Accordingly, applicants submit that new claim 35 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Such action is most earnestly solicited. If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below for an interview.

If there are any charges due with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully Submitted,
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